

**TENNESSEE COMMISSION FOR THE UNITED STATES SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL  
Microsoft Teams Video Conference  
And In-Person  
Nashville, Tennessee**

**Minutes  
July 21, 2023**

The Tennessee Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial met this day at 1:00 PM CT for a meeting both in-person and utilizing a Microsoft Teams forum. Notice was given seven (7) days prior on the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development website. The meeting was called to order at 1:05 PM CT by Chairperson Ashley Howell. Roll was called and a quorum was established, with the following members present:

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dr. David Chaffin  
Dr. Warren Dockter  
Commissioner Mark Ezell  
Ashley Howell  
Jamie Ritter  
Emily Robinson  
Dr. Carroll Van West

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Clark Boyd  
Jennifer Core  
Senator Rusty Crowe  
Senator Todd Gardenhire  
Representative G.A. Hardaway  
Patrick McIntyre

**GUESTS PRESENT**

Alicia Widrig, Department of Tourist Development, General Counsel, Acting Attorney for the Commission  
Andi Grindley, Department of Tourist Development, Outreach Projects Coordinator, Acting Secretary for the Commission  
Melanie Beauchamp, Department of Tourist Development, Assistant Commissioner Rural Tourism & Outreach  
Mary Katelyn Price, Department of Tourist Development, Legislative Liaison  
Diana Bramble, Superintendent, National Park Service Southern Campaign Sites  
Lisa Oakley, East Tennessee Historical Society, Vice President and Curator of Education  
Nikki Ward, Tennessee Historical Society, Director of Membership and Programs

**AGENDA**

**Welcome**, Howell

Welcome and call to order for a meeting of the Tennessee Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial.

**Housekeeping**, Grindley

- Roll Call. 7 members were present, 6 members were absent at the time of the roll call. A quorum was established.
- A statement of necessity will be filed with the Tennessee Secretary of State’s Office within two days per Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-44-108(a)(3). The Statement of Necessity was read into the record at the onset of the meeting, per statutory requirements for electronic meetings, and rendered as essential to select commission officers and discuss educational opportunities and a budget request.
- Approved the May Minutes of the Commission without a reading, as the Minutes were provided to members in advance of the meeting. Motion by West with second by Dockter. No further discussion, move to a roll call vote:

Representative Clark Boyd		Ashley Howell	Yes
Jennifer Core		Patrick McIntyre	
Senator Rusty Crowe		Jamie Ritter	
Dr. Warren Dockter	Yes	Emily Robinson	Yes
Commissioner Mark Ezell	Yes	Dr. David Chaffin	Yes
Senator Todd Gardenhire		Dr. Carroll Van West	Yes
Representative G.A. Hardaway			

Motion carries.

**Selection of Board Officers**, Howell

1. Tabled discussion for a future time.

**Publications Committee Update**, Dockter, Ritter

1. Dockter: Committee discussed a budget for publications and submitted it to Howell. Committee feels that contributors in upcoming journals should be paid an honorarium for new research. East TN Historical Society will do an edited collection of past essays and a new journal with new research. Potential to do a catalog of 100 objects/locations.
2. Ritter: TN State Library & Archives will pull some documents of the time and reproducing those to look like the originals and placing them in a folder/insert into the packaged materials.
3. Howell: Gave recap of suggested publications budget numbers.

**Educational Opportunities**, Oakley, Ward

1. Oakley: Discover TN History is a consortium of state/regional level historical organizations and museums that partner to do more with what they have. Host and facilitate programs for teachers and students. They have done conferences for teachers and offer webinars for teachers. Everything they have done so far has been for teacher development or students. Would like to offer programming in each division of the state in State Parks, perhaps on Fridays before planned State Parks 250<sup>th</sup> events for the public. Additional artifact & document boxes is another idea, although this is costly as far as shipping, etc.

2. Ward: Want to provide lesson plan ideas. Special award for students for TN History Day for 250<sup>th</sup> projects. Current budget for all of these projects is \$135,300.

**Discussion of Goalsetting/Budget Request**, Howell

1. Howell: We have penciled in a \$5,000,000 request for projects including publications, education, an online exhibition of stories/objects/landmarks/places, community grants, staff support, website. We need to continue to fine-tune these programs. Does this capture the intent/spirit of the commission?
2. West: Having led the listening sessions, the budget is in line with what the people of TN want to see the commission do.
3. Ezell: Agree with Dr. West. Missing the visitor spend, visitor experience, ROI data piece. Believe it may be a struggle to get that amount of funding, but need to focus on education, what the public wants, awareness, instead of tourism piece.
4. Dockter: All DAR/SAR groups ask about 250<sup>th</sup>, they want to be involved, lots of community investment and interest in 250<sup>th</sup>.
5. West: Most would be in-state tourism, although East TN sites will pull from bordering states. This is this generation’s Homecoming ’86. What made that special was the community involvement, events, etc. That’s what we need to remind the older legislators.
6. Beauchamp: If funding runs through tourism, grants will have to be administered through Tourism, unless it’s a direct appropriation from the legislature.
7. Howell: American Association of State and Local History just released a report on 250<sup>th</sup> and state commissions across the country. Number one discussion point is funding. America250 has launched America’s Invitation and are getting early media buzz.

**Old Business**, Howell

No old business.

**New Business**, Howell

No new business.

**Public Comments**

No public comments.

**Closing Remarks**, Howell

Motion to adjourn by Dockter with second from Robinson. No further discussion, move to a roll call vote:

Representative Clark Boyd		Ashley Howell	Yes
Jennifer Core		Patrick McIntyre	
Senator Rusty Crowe		Jamie Ritter	
Dr. Warren Dockter	Yes	Emily Robinson	Yes
Commissioner Mark Ezell	Yes	Dr. David Chaffin	
Senator Todd Gardenhire		Dr. Carroll Van West	Yes
Representative G.A. Hardaway			

Meeting adjourned at 2:04 pm.

Approved:

8/25/2023

Date

*Andi Brindley*

Acting Secretary

Department of Tourist Development